

Applicant : Scott Montgomery
Appl. No. : 09/990,605
Examiner : Kambiz Abdi
Docket No. : 703602.6

Remarks

Claims 1-156 have been canceled, claims 157 and 158 have been amended and claims 159-161 have been added. Claims 157-161 are pending in the claims. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in view of the following comments.

Support for new claim 159 can be found, for example, in paragraph [0151].
Support for new claims 160 and 161 can be found, for example, in paragraph [0166].

Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 157 and 158 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitehouse (U.S. 6,005,945) in view of Sutherland (U.S. 6,349,292). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 157 is patentable because none of the cited references, taken either alone or in combination, discloses, teaches, or suggests "wherein the centralized postage-issuing computer system enables a postal authority to verify postage on the mail piece by sending the tracking identification string to the centralized postage-issuing computer system, wherein upon receiving the tracking identification string from the postal authority, the centralized postage-issuing retrieves the unique postage indicium from the database and sends the unique postage indicium to the postal authority" (emphasis). In contrast, in Whitehouse, the postal authority reads the postage indicium printed on the mail piece itself and validates the postage indicium read from the mail piece.

By retrieving the postage indicium from a database at the centralized computer, the claimed invention advantageously allows the postage of a mail piece to be verified using the postage indicium without the need of printing the entire postage indicium on the mail piece. The claimed invention only requires that the tracking ID be printed on the mail piece and read by the postal authority. This is because the postal authority sends the tracking ID to the centralized computer, which then retrieves the associated postage indicium from the database. By not requiring that the entire postage indicium

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be printed on the mail piece, the claimed invention frees up space on the mail piece that can be used for other purposes such as addressing, advertising, etc. Further, tracking IDs are generally faster and easier to print than postage indiciums, which reduces the printing load on the end user's printer. In addition, tracking IDs are generally easier to read than postage indiciums, which reduces the capital expenditure for reading hardware.

For at least the reasons given above, Applicant submits that claim 157 is patentable over the cited references, and respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 157 be withdrawn.

Claims 158 and 159 depend from claim 157, and are therefore patentable for at least the reasons given for claim 157. Claim 159 is additionally patentable because none of the cited reference discloses, teaches, or suggests a unique postage indicium comprising a digital signature that is not applied to the mail piece. By not applying the digital signature of the postage indicium to the mail piece, the claimed invention enables the postage authority to benefit from security features of the digital signature without the need of printing the digital signature on the mail piece itself.

New Claims

New claim 160 is patentable because none of the cited references, taken either alone or in combination, discloses, teaches, or suggests "wherein the centralized postage-issuing computer system enables a postal authority to verify postage on the mail piece by sending the tracking identification string to the centralized postage-issuing computer system, wherein upon receiving the tracking identification string from the postal authority, the centralized postage-issuing computer retrieves and validates the unique postage indicium using a public key, and sends an indication of whether the unique postage indicium is valid to the postal authority" (emphasis added). In contrast, in Whitehouse, the postal authority reads the postage indicium printed on the mail piece

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itself and validates the postage indicium read from the mail piece. Nowhere does Whitehouse teach or suggest the postal authority sending a tracking ID to a centralized computer and, upon receiving the tracking ID, the centralized computer retrieving and validating the postage indicium using a public key.

New claim 161 depends from claim 160, and is therefore patentable for at least the reasons given for claim 160.

Conclusion

Prompt and favorable action on the merits of the claims is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the undersigned can be reached at (949) 567-6700.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee which may be required in connection with this Amendment to deposit account No. 15-0665.

Respectfully submitted,

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